

## **Methodology for Assessing Radiation Detectors Used by Emergency Responders**

The threat of weapons of mass destruction terrorism resulted in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security deploying large quantities of radiation detectors throughout the emergency responder community. However, emergency responders' specific needs were not always met by standard health physics instrumentation used in radiation facilities. Several American National Standards Institute standards were developed and approved to evaluate the technical capabilities of detection equipment. Establishing technical capability is a critical step, but it is equally important to emergency responders that the instruments are easy to operate and can withstand the rugged situations they encounter. The System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program (managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Grants and Training, Systems Support Division) focuses predominantly on the usability, ergonomics, readability, and other features of the detectors, rather than performance controlled by industry standards and the manufacturers. National Security Technologies, LLC, as a SAVER Technical Agent, conducts equipment evaluations using active emergency responders who are familiar with the detection equipment and knowledgeable of situations encountered in the field, which provides more relevant data to emergency responders.

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